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ABSTRACT

The sequential components of a model for the development of an upper-division marketing certificate program in professional sales are described in this report as they were implemented at the University of Minnesota's General College during Fall 1980. After introductory material examining the responsibilities of the professional sales representative, the report describes eight steps in the implementation of a business education program designed to provide the background needed for a professional sales career: (1) an analysis of educational needs in the area of sales through interviews with members of the business community and General College faculty and students; (2) the development of a budget for a pilot program through an examination of the costs incurred in designing the curriculum and in recruiting and advising students; (3) the review and acceptance of the budget by appropriate department heads and administrators; (4) the establishment of preliminary admissions criteria; (5) the final evaluation of the pilot program by industry, faculty, and student representatives; (6) the design and implementation of a permanent program; (7) the implementation of annual program evaluations through an advisory board; and (8) the extension of the program to off-campus locations. Included in the report is an examination of the research and data collection efforts at each phase of program development. (JP)

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A MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN UPPER-DIVISION MARKETING CERTIFICATE
PROGRAM: PROFESSIONAL SALES.

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A Model for the Development of an Upper-Division
Marketing Certificate Program: Professional Sales

Introduction

The focus of this paper is the model used to develop the professional sales program, an upper-division market certificate pilot program to be implemented in fall 1980. The flow chart used by the Marketing Coordinator which illustrates the steps for proceeding from origination of the program idea to the implementation of the pilot program is also included, together with research techniques used to support various phases in the model. This paper commences, however, with a brief description of a professional sales representative and how the idea for the program was conceived.

Professional Sales Representative

A professional sales representative is a creative problem solver who is dedicated to fulfilling the needs of potential customers. He or she not only has a strong desire to sell, but also behaves in an ethical manner and has organizational abilities, an optimistic attitude, a pleasant personality, and an ability to converse intelligently about many topics.

Professional sales representatives serve in a variety of sales positions. The sales person may represent a manufacturer and sell to wholesalers or retailers, or may represent a wholesaler and sell to retailers, for example. These sales representatives may work for a major corporation or a small corporation or be independent business men and business women.

Program Inception

The inspiration for the professional sales program originated in the winter of 1978 by a call from a member of Sales and Marketing Executives of Minneapolis (SME). Representatives from the organization felt the General College offered a unique opportunity to incorporate sales and marketing and other business-related courses with general education courses, which is precisely the background needed for a professional sales representative. The Marketing Coordinator then proceeded to investigate the possibility of incorporating a professional sales program in the marketing offerings.

The Model

The model used for the development of the professional sales program is portrayed in Figure 1. It consists of eight phases: 1) needs analysis, 2) pilot program development, 3) initial pilot program evaluation, 4) pilot program implementation, 5) final pilot program evaluation, 6) design and implementation of permanent program, 7) evaluation of permanent program, and 8) extended delivery system of permanent program. The Marketing Coordinator flow chart depicting the necessary activities from potential program ideas to Phase 5, evaluation of the pilot program, is presented in Figure 2. Phases 1, 3, 5, and 7 of the model require input from sources other than the Marketing Coordinator and other individuals routinely available for guidance and advice. The process for acquiring this information is discussed under the research section of this paper.

Phase 1

The proposed professional sales program must consider the needs of three publics: the business community, the General College, and students. Representatives of the business community specified objectives for a

FIGURE 1 WAS DELETED DUE TO IRREPRODUCIBILITY. IT PRESENTED
A MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN UPPER DIVISION MARKETING
CERTIFICATE PROGRAM -- PROFESSIONAL SALES

professional sales program that included skills and knowledge appropriate for professional sales representatives. These objectives were articulated by representatives from both sales and sales management. The General College has defined objectives determined by both faculty and administration; and these objectives, together with marketing certificate objectives that have been previously defined by the Marketing Coordinator, must be incorporated in the development of any marketing certificate program. Student objectives were obtained from General College students, alumni, and non-General College students.

Phases 2 and 3

After considering the input from the business community, the General College, and students, the Marketing Coordinator designed the pilot program and then described it in a brochure that was distributed for evaluation to representatives of these same publics. Pilot program acceptance was required before the program could be implemented.

Phase 4

Based on the information obtained in Phase 1, the Marketing Coordinator developed initial admissions criteria which will be used to select students admitted to the pilot program effective fall 1980. The advisory board of directors, which meets for the first time in fall 1980, will give guidance to the development of future admissions criteria.

Phase 5

Final evaluation of the pilot professional sales program will be by representatives from the previously mentioned publics in Phases 1 and 3. The All-College Curriculum Committee (designated Curriculum Committee in the model) must approve each new course developed for the program. The program

must then be approved by the General College Assembly, the Academic Vice President of the University, the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Board of Regents before it becomes a permanent offering in the College.

Phase 6

The Marketing Coordinator will consider any criticism of the pilot program in the design and implementation of the permanent program.

Phase 7

The advisory board of directors will provide continuous guidance and advice and make annual evaluations of the permanent program. Every three to five years, the program will be reevaluated by representatives from the business community, the General College faculty, students in the program, and alumni.

Phase 8

The Marketing Coordinator will analyze the opportunities to extend the professional sales delivery system. Establishing professional sales programs on off-campus locations, but still under the auspices of the General College, constitutes outreach. Assisting other institutions in establishing their own professional sales program is considered exporting the program.

Marketing Coordinator Flow Chart

The flow chart for establishing a pilot marketing certificate program is illustrated in Figure 2. As mentioned previously, any potential program must fulfill the objectives of both the General College and the Market Certificate programs.

Develop Needs Analysis

A needs analysis, Phase 1 of the model, was developed by concurrently

FIGURE 2 (PAGE 8) WAS DELETED DUE TO IRREPRODUCIBILITY. IT CONTAINED
A MARKETING COORDINATOR FLOW CHART FOR PILOT MARKETING CERTIFICATE
PROGRAM

analyzing student interest in the potential sales program, specific skills and knowledge to be taught, employment potentials for graduates, the state of the art of education in professional sales, and other sales programs available. While designing an upper-division program that was appropriate for General College students, the needs and abilities of students in community colleges were also strongly considered. Students in two-year business programs, including the General College, often find their business courses will not transfer to colleges of business administration. Because the General College will accept these transfer credits, the college is in a position to develop unique programs that can build on these two-year programs. Representatives from industry were contacted to identify strengths and weaknesses among sales representatives in their organizations. These executives were also asked to identify potential placement for graduates from a program that included the skills and knowledge identified as necessary for the success of a professional sales representative. Various faculty members also provided input into the skills and knowledge area, state of the art, and programs available.

The results of the various inquiries indicated that there was a strong interest among students for a professional sales program, that specific skills and knowledge could be identified and taught, and that there should be a demand for students completing the program. Responses regarding state of the art and programs available were mixed. Certain topics suggested by the business community, such as territory and product line management, are not usually included in college curricula, and teaching materials would have to be created. However, a number of community colleges and some colleges of business administration have courses on selling and sales

management. The Marketing Coordinator was unable to identify any professional program under consideration, so potential student demand for the program should be strong.

The needs analysis phase results in a decision either to abandon program development or to proceed with program development by constructing a budget. The Marketing Coordinator decided to proceed.

Develop Budget

The complex process of developing a budget was the initial stage of designing the pilot program, Phase 2. The budget was determined by considering the size of the pilot program, the curriculum, the advising procedures, and the recruiting procedures.

The size of the program determines many costs: number of support people to administer and evaluate the program; number of sections per course, including number of classrooms and number of instruction hours; and released time for the Marketing Coordinator. Funding for curriculum development prior to implementation must be considered. This can be particularly expensive if any of the courses are innovative and teaching materials need to be designed. Advising procedures must also be considered in budget development. If advising procedures are on a one-to-one basis and occur each quarter, the costs are much higher than if there is group advising or yearly program reviewal, for example. The last area for consideration in budget development is recruiting. Recruiting for a new program can be expensive, particularly if the new program applicant pool differs from the traditional applicant pool for the college. Decisions must be made regarding channel of communications for the program: counselors at colleges vs. print or broadcast media, for example.

The pilot professional sales program is anticipated to admit approximately 25 students, using the curriculum described in the brochure. (Brochures are available on request.) Advising will initially be on a group basis with one-to-one advising available when necessary. Annual student reviews will be individualized. Recruitment initially uses the traditional methods of the College, although the Marketing Coordinator meets with counselors and faculty from community colleges when requested.

Once the budget is developed, the Marketing Coordinator decides whether the program costs are within the latitude of acceptability or are excessive and program development should be discontinued. Of course, the Science, Business, and Mathematics Division Head and the Dean of the College are always available for guidance on the budget or any other area of the program. The budget did not seem excessive, and the Market Coordinator proceeded to develop the pilot program.

Develop Pilot Program

The final stage of designing a pilot program consisted of developing the program. Preliminary admissions criteria were established and initial program scheduling was completed.

Obtain Permission to Implement Pilot Program

Before a pilot marketing program can be initiated, permission and support are required from the business studies faculty, division head, and the dean, Phase 3. A veto from any of the three halts program implementation. Initial evaluations from students and the business community indicated there were no suggestions for significant changes in the pilot program. These evaluations were used as support for obtaining permission to implement the pilot program. Permission to implement the pilot program was obtained without difficulty.

Implement Program

The pilot professional sales program is now entering Phase 4, program implementation. Relevant trade associations are currently being identified, publicity strategies are being considered, faculty are being identified and contacted, the Curriculum Committee is being notified of new course offerings, and the advisory board of directors is being assembled. The agenda for the first board meeting in the fall has been developed and includes admittance procedures and pilot program analysis. Placement procedures and program evaluation criteria will be discussed at future meetings.

Final Pilot Program Evaluation

Final evaluation of the pilot program, Phase 5, is anticipated in fall 1983.

Research for a Professional Sales Program

Research for the professional sales program investigates four phases of the model: Phase 1, pilot program needs analysis; Phase 3, initial pilot program evaluation; Phase 5, final pilot program evaluation; and Phase 7, evaluation of the permanent program. The research in Phases 1 and 3 was exploratory and used judgmental samples. Summary of data collection is presented in Table 1.

Student interest in a professional sales program was analyzed by both a focus group interview and personal interviews with General College students. The majority of these students were already taking some business courses. Community college faculty and counselors were contacted individually and in groups regarding their perceptions of student interest in enrolling in an upper-division professional sales program in the College. Specific

Table 1

Summary Data Collection for the Professional Sales Program

Topic Investigated	Population							
	General College Students	General College Alumni	General College Faculty	Community College Faculty and Counselors	Other Non-General College Faculty	SME	SMEI	Sales Representatives Executives in Major Corporations
I. Completed								
Phase 1. Pilot Program Needs Analysis								
Student Interest	a b			a c				
Specific Skills and Knowledge			a c			a		a a
Employment Potential		a				a		a a
State of Art			a	a c	a	a	a	a a
Programs Available			a	a c	a	a	a	a a
Phase 3. Initial Pilot Program Evaluation (Based on brochure)	c			a c	a	a	a	a a
II. To Be Completed								
Phase 5. Final Pilot Program Evaluation								
Phase 7. Evaluation of Permanent Program								

Key:

- a = personal interview (Market Coordinator asks questions of respondent in one-to-one format)
- b = focus group interview (six students brought together to discuss one topic--interest in professional sales program)
- c = group discussion (Market Coordinator discusses variety of topics related to professional sales)

skills and knowledge to be included in the program were identified from personal interviews with representatives from Sales and Marketing Executives of Minneapolis (SME), from executives in major corporations who were vice presidents of sales or marketing or were chief operating officers, from sales representatives, and from General College faculty. Group discussions were also held with General College faculty. Employment potential was evaluated from personal interviews with General College alumni; representatives from SME, including personnel representatives; sales representatives; and the same executives from major corporations previously mentioned. The state of the art and programs available were analyzed from the group discussions with faculty from colleges in Minnesota, SME, Sales and Marketing Executives International (SMEI), sales representatives, and corporate executives.

Some interviews covered several areas of needs analysis. For example, interviews with corporate executives and sales representatives included questions regarding specific skills and knowledge, employment potential, state of the art as they perceived it, and programs available. Some interviews covered only one area. Students were asked if they would be interested in enrolling in a program that trained them to be professional sales representatives.

The initial pilot program evaluation was obtained by presenting the program brochure to several groups of community college counselors and faculty and asking them to evaluate it. Other college faculty, including the General College, representatives from SME and SMEI, sales representatives and corporate executives, were interviewed individually for their evaluation of the program based on the brochure.

Phases 5 and 7 of the model will be evaluated in the future. The questionnaires to be used will be designed with assistance from the advisory

board of directors. The responses will be analyzed using techniques appropriate for the data collection method.

Summary

The model for the development of an upper-division marketing certificate program, together with the marketing coordinator flow chart and accompanying research techniques, served several purposes. The model identified the steps necessary to incorporate a new program into the General College permanent offering. The model and the flow chart identified interrelationships in the analysis and development of the program and aided the Marketing Coordinator in both short- and long-range planning. The model and flow chart also disciplined the Marketing Coordinator to follow the step-by-step process needed to achieve program acceptance.

The research served three particularly useful purposes: 1) it identified business community and student needs; 2) it served as a means of strengthening General College-business community and General College-community college interactions; and 3) it publicized the professional sales program. The additional communication resulting from the research should also increase the acceptance of the professional sales program by both the business community and students.

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